

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### PRISONERS OF SILENCE.

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#### CHAPTER XIX.

THE outlook from the window of Archdeacon French's study, on a certain February afternoon, was very far from cheerful. The trees in the Close gardens shivered disconsolately under low, grey skies, and swayed to and fro before an occasional gust of wind, which seemed to change the fine mist with which the air was heavy into a sudden blur of rain. Archdeacon French himself was paying no attention to the prospect from his windows, but judging from his expression as he paced slowly and thoughtfully up and down the room, the influence of the weather might have been heavy upon him. His face was very grave, and there was a slight trace of anxiety about it; his eyes were clouded as if with preoccupation, and they were a little sad. He had stopped mechanically in his walk, and was gazing absently out over the grey gardens, when the door opened, and a servant announced "Dr. Branston." Archdeacon French turned quickly.

"Ah, Branston," he said, "that's right! How are you?"

The tone in which the words were uttered made them the cordial welcome of an expected visitor. And North Branston answered as they shook hands:

"Many thanks for your note. I should have called though, anyhow."

"Taken your chance of finding me, and possibly have gone away without giving me a chance to say good-bye, eh? I should have been sorry for that, Branston."

There was a moment's pause, and then North Branston, with a sudden glow in his deep-set eyes, answered quickly:

"So should I, sir. Thank you."

Silence followed—one of those silences eloquent, not of constraint, but of a mutual sense of something which would render irrelevant trivialities of every day. It was broken by Archdeacon French.

"You go to-morrow, I believe?" he said.

North Branston made a gesture of assent.

"Yes," he said. "By the three-twenty."

"The appointment is a good one?"

"Fairly. Yes; good on the whole."

"And it leads to better things?"

"It has been known to do so; yes."

Archdeacon French's words had come from him rather slowly—hardly perceptible intervals ensuing on North Branston's replies—his eyes all the time intently observant of the younger man's face.

"Good!" he said heartily, on the last words. He paused a moment, and then went on, with a reserved kindness of tone which was as full of tact as of sympathy. "I won't say how much we shall miss you here; you know that, I hope. But I will say how well pleased I am that you should be able to move out into a wider field. I may say now without impertinence what I have observed for some time; that Alnchester is a somewhat narrow sphere."

Neither the tone nor the slight smile with which the words were uttered brought any answering expression to North Branston's face. He was looking before him almost absently.

"Perhaps," he answered indifferently.

"I don't know."

"You are looking forward to the change?"

Again Archdeacon French smiled.

A shrug of the shoulders was at first North Branston's only answer. Then he said listlessly:

"I'm not much of an enthusiast, you know, sir. I don't expect much, one way or the other."

There was a moment's silence, and then the Archdeacon, changing the subject, began to talk about London and connexions of his own there, offering the younger man, in the course of his talk, sundry introductions, which were accepted frankly, if without any great warmth. And shortly afterwards North Branston rose.

"I have some patients to see," he said; "and a good many odds and ends to attend to."

His host rose also.

"Of course," he said pleasantly. "I'm only glad you made time to come and see me at all. You have a good many farewell visits on hand, I expect."

They were standing face to face now, and North looked back into the kind, shrewd eyes with an odd gleam in his own.

"Do you think so, sir?" he said. "In Alnchester?"

There was an odd directness about the words which seemed to cross the indefinable barriers by which the previous conversation had been vaguely hedged about.

Archdeacon French held out his hand with a sudden movement; he gripped the fingers that met his strongly.

"My boy," he said firmly and directly, "you are making a mistake. You can't live on those terms with your fellow men, and live all round. Here or in London you must be in touch with your world, or half your being is paralysed. Good-bye, and all good wishes."

"Thank you, sir," returned North. There was a slight smile about his mouth, but he shook hands heartily. "There's one good-bye I'm sorry to say, at any rate, and I say that now. Good-bye."

A moment or two later he had passed out into the grey dampness of the February afternoon.

Three weeks had passed since the Infirmary ball; three weeks during which Alnchester had never been at a loss for a topic of conversation. The death of Sir William Karslake, following so suddenly upon the interest of the ball, had come as a climax so unforeseen, and on such other lines than had been looked for, that the first thrill which ran through Alnchester on

receipt of the news was almost too awestruck to be pleasurable. Alnchester recovered itself, however, almost immediately. Before the news was twelve hours old it had become possible to connect the new excitement with its somewhat paled predecessor, to the considerable heightening of both; it had become possible to conjecture with solemn loquacity as to how far the dead man's seizure had been accelerated, or even induced, by the emotions excited in him by his wife's conduct, and to construct hypotheses, at about the rate of one per speaker, as to his widow's present state of mind with regard to her past behaviour. On Lady Karslake, indeed, her doings being still open to conjecture, the attention of Alnchester was particularly concentrated. The arrangements for the funeral, which took place in Alnchester cemetery, were discussed extensively in town and precincts—the detail in connection therewith which was most freely canvassed being the widow's personal presence at the grave—and her subsequent plans were breathlessly awaited. The interval of expectancy was not long. Three days after the funeral it was known in Alnchester that Hatherleigh Grange was to be sold; that Lady Karslake was leaving England for Vienna, where her nearest connexions were established in the diplomatic service; and the next news was that she was actually gone. But the departure of Lady Karslake, though it closed one chapter of Alnchester gossip, save and except from the point of view of reminiscence, did not leave the city wholly destitute from a conversational point of view.

Side by side with the events at Hatherleigh, there had occurred events in the Vallotson household which would alone have created considerable talk. The news of Sir William Karslake's death ran through the city side by side with the news of Mrs. Vallotson's illness; somewhat serious illness it was understood to be at first, involving total collapse and prostration. Opinions were somewhat divided as to whether the oncoming of this illness had been responsible for that callousness as to North Branston's reprehensible doings at the ball, which some people ascribed to her; or whether the callousness in question was a mere figment, and extreme annoyance responsible for the illness. The latter theory reached the top of the poll by leaps and bounds, when, as Mrs. Vallotson begun to move slowly towards convalescence, it became known in Alnchester that North

Branston had accepted an appointment in London and was leaving immediately.

The news created quite a sensation. North Branston was leaving Dr. Vallotson's house in consequence of his disgraceful flirtation with Lady Karslake. Of this there was no doubt whatever in the public mind, and the flirtation in question promptly assumed immeasurably larger and more definite proportions. The old feeling against North came out of ambush, as it were, in the atmosphere of disgrace thus created about him. It was suddenly discovered that everybody had always known that he would never "do" in Alnchester, and that that immaculate city would be distinctly more herself when he was gone.

The day before his departure had come, and as North turned into the High Street after leaving Archdeacon French's house, he was passing through the street as a citizen of Alnchester almost for the last time. But there was no excitement or elation either about his face or manner. His expression was, perhaps, a shade more stern—a shade harder than usual; and his manner as he exchanged one or two farewells was coldly indifferent.

He had visited his last patient and was just issuing again into the street, when a figure passing along the pavement in front of the house, with collar turned up and hands plunged rather disconsolately into the pockets of his coat, stopped short and extricated one of his hands quickly. It was Bryan Armitage.

"Hullo, North!" he said; "how jolly to meet you! You're off to-morrow, aren't you?"

It was the cheery, boyish phraseology to which Bryan was always addicted, but his voice was hardly so absolutely in keeping with it as had been its wont. It seemed to have lost its ring. North Branston's attention, however, was not sufficiently disengaged to penetrate beyond the words themselves, and he answered briefly, "Yes," moving on as he spoke, as with a tacit understanding that Bryan would walk on with him.

Spells of silence were not usually in Bryan Armitage's line, but they had walked nearly the length of the street before he spoke again, and when he roused himself at last it was with an obvious effort.

"Well," he said lightly, "I don't suppose you are sorry to go. Alnchester isn't much of a place, after all. I suppose one does get rather narrow and stupid poked up in

it. Sometimes I think I should like to get away myself."

There was a boyish dejection about the last sentences, and an obvious incapacity for detaching his mind from his own affairs against which the heavy reserve of North's silence struck oddly. Bryan Armitage plodded along, meditating for a minute or two, and then went on:

"I think I should have had a try at getting away if you hadn't been going, North. I've always thought, don't you know, that you might have had no end of influence over her and put her straight all round, only somehow you don't seem quite to hit it off."

North turned his face towards his companion.

"Who is she?" he enquired.

Bryan Armitage coloured hotly.

"Oh, hadn't we mentioned her?" he said confusedly. "Connie, I meant, of course. Didn't I say Connie? If you had been going to stay I should have just given you a hint, and you'd have managed things a great deal better than I can. But as you're not, I suppose I'd better hold on. Not that she listens to a word I say, worse luck!"

The tone was very rueful and just a little unsteady.

"What's wrong with her?" said North indifferently.

"There's nothing wrong with her!" was the quick retort. "Not likely! Only——" He paused a moment and went on hesitatingly and confidentially: "She's got all sorts of rum notions, don't you know. Beastly place Girton must be! And she wants setting right all over the place."

North Branston's face grew a shade colder.

"I think you may safely leave her to her mother, Bryan," he said; "her views won't be allowed to materialise themselves at any rate."

There was no answer, unless the sigh which proceeded from Bryan, weighted as it seemed with the trouble and responsibility of a universe, could be so called. They walked on in silence until they reached the end of the road in which was Dr. Vallotson's house. Then Bryan Armitage stopped abruptly:

"Good-bye, old fellow," he said huskily.

"Won't you come in?" asked North in a surprised tone.

"No," was the hasty answer. "I—I can't."

He stopped a moment, and then broke out suddenly:

"I say, North, I suppose it was awful cheek of me, but I proposed to—Connie, you know, at that confounded ball. And—and—"

"She refused you, I suppose?"

The question was brief enough, but it was not unsympathetic, and nothing was added to it on Bryan's hurried gesture of assent but the quick outstretching of North Branston's hand.

"Good-bye, old fellow!" said Bryan Armitage with a brave attempt at cheeriness. "I shall be after you soon, I dare say."

He turned away abruptly, and disappeared in the fast-falling twilight.

North Branston went on his way somewhat slowly, the air of preoccupation, broken for the moment by a touch of half-amused pity, settling upon him once more. He went into the house, and was going down the passage towards his own room, when he stopped and hesitated. Then, hearing a sound as of some one moving in the dining-room, he pushed open the door and went in. Constance was there alone, wearing her hat and jacket.

"Constance," said North Branston tersely, "give that note to your mother, please."

He held out a little square envelope as he spoke, but Constance did not take it.

"Oh, take it in yourself, North," she said rather impatiently. "I'm going out to tea, and I'm late as it is. Mother's only lying down in the drawing-room."

There was a moment's pause: North Branston neither assented nor refused. Then, as Constance continued severely, "You've not been in her room to-day," he cut her short, saying briefly, "Very well."

He was turning to leave the room when Constance called him back. Her eyes had fallen on a black-edged envelope lying on the table, and, as she lifted them again to North Branston, they were sharp with something that might have been described as curiosity, could such a sentiment have been ascribed to a regenerator of mankind.

"Put that card in the basket as you pass, North, will you?" she said. "I forgot it."

She pointed to the black-edged envelope on the table, watching North as he took it up mechanically. He looked at the direction on the envelope and paused a moment. But not the faintest change of expression was visible to Constance's eyes as he drew out the card, glanced at it, and carried it without comment out of the room. The card bore the words, "Lady

Karslake," and added to the name, in Lady Karslake's own handwriting, were the words, "With thanks for kind enquiries.—P.P.C." Through the address, "Hatherleigh Grange," a pen had been drawn.

North Branston strode down the passage to the table, on which stood the card-basket, and then stood for a moment looking down at the card in his hand with a half-smile dawning about his mouth. It was the smile of a man who looks back at something in the past which the movement of life has left behind. It was cynical; but it also suggested that the reminiscence in question had about it a certain halo of interest and charm. He dropped the card into the basket and turned towards the drawing-room.

As a reminiscence, and as a reminiscence only, had Lady Karslake any place in North Branston's thoughts. Between the days, recent enough in point of time, when she had been an actual factor in his life—a hardly appreciated pleasure or refreshment—and the present, when she had passed utterly out of his sphere, there lay a great gulf; a gulf created by one of those sudden upheavals of long-smouldering natural forces by which the whole face of a landscape may be changed in the spiritual as in the natural world. In the stormy scene between himself and Mrs. Vallotson, interrupted by his summons to Hatherleigh Grange, the bonds which had warped his whole life, overstrained at last, had seemed suddenly to snap.

That scene, brief as it was, had burnt up all possibilities of his continued sojourn under Dr. Vallotson's roof. That departure which had hitherto been impossible to him had presented itself subsequently as an inevitable step in the natural course of events. He had made his preparations quietly and decidedly. His plans being matured, and an appointment in London having been applied for and obtained, he had announced the fact to Mrs. Vallotson as a foregone conclusion. A moment's dead silence had followed his announcement, to be succeeded by a curt word or two of assent; and neither in that interview nor in any other had any reference been made by either to the night of the Infirmary ball.

The link of outward circumstance was broken; the long bitterness of everyday contact was to be henceforward a thing of the past. North Branston was a free man now, as he had never been in all his life before. But his demeanour was marked by none of the elation, none, even, of the



serenity which should naturally characterise a man thus liberated. The air of quiet well-being, which had pervaded him in the early days of his decision, had gradually worn away, to be replaced by the indifference which he had evinced during his parting interview with Archdeacon French; by the cold grimness with which he had passed through the Alnchester streets; and by the accentuated bitterness which lurked about his mouth and eyes now, as he opened the door of the drawing-room and went in.

The room was very quiet; there was, indeed, a curious hush over the whole house. Mrs. Vallotson lay on the sofa, her face turned from the door, still and peaceful. She was quite unoccupied, and the fact, in a woman so vigorous and stirring, was strikingly suggestive of absolute repose of mind and body. She stirred rather feebly as the door opened, and looked round. She saw North Branston, and her face changed suddenly and entirely; it became constrained and sharp, and the constraint was reflected in the face of her visitor as he came slowly towards her. In the expression of neither was there any of that softened tolerance that should come of the recognition and abandonment of an overstrained position; none of that sufferance which the prospect of a parting should make so easy.

She turned her head away, and drew the shawl with which she was wrapped close about her. She did not speak; and North said, stiffly and formally:

"I hope you are better to-night, Adelaide?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Mrs. Elliott has sent you this note; Constance asked me to bring it to you."

He handed her the envelope he held. She took it without looking at him, and let it lie beside her on the sofa.

"Thank you," she said. "It is of no consequence."

There was a moment's interval of silence; then North Branston, rather as with a perfunctory sense of what it behoved him to do, under the circumstances, than on any spontaneous impulse, took up a position in front of the fire, and remarked:

"It has been a wretched day."

"Yes."

"You have had no visitors, I suppose?"

The trivial conversationalism came oddly in his stiff, deep tones.

"No."

The monosyllable was abruptly, even irritably, spoken. But as she uttered it, Mrs. Vallotson also seemed to rouse herself

to the conventional exigencies of the situation.

"I hope Jane has attended properly to your packing," she said.

"I believe so, thank you."

But as there are physical atmospheres in which no light can burn, so there are spiritual atmospheres in which no conversation can flourish. The words were followed by a frozen pause.

It was broken suddenly by Mrs. Vallotson. She had turned on her sofa, and was lying with her own face in shadow, and her black eyes fixed full upon North.

"Have you heard that Lady Karslake has left England?" she said.

North paused a minute; looking steadily towards her, though he could hardly see her face; the muscles round his mouth standing out distinctly.

"I have been told so," he said, "some twenty times in the course of the last two days."

"Have you heard it from herself?"

The voice rang out harsh and insistent; almost, as it seemed, beyond its owner's control. Again an instant passed before North Branston answered.

"No," he said.

She moved suddenly, as though to see his face better, bringing her own face into the full light of the lamp. He confronted her steadily with a white contempt stamped upon every feature, and their eyes met.

A moment later North Branston had turned on his heel abruptly, and had left the room. He went straight down the passage, shut himself into his own room, and set about some final preparations for his departure, his face set, his movements deliberate and concentrated—the movements of a man who keeps thought and feeling determinedly at bay.

The link of circumstances might break; the link of everyday contact might cease to be; but that other link, subtle, mysterious, by which this man and woman were held together, remained intact. The chain of antipathy held strong and unbroken. External freedom had come to North Branston; yet—even as he realised the fact, even as he stepped out, as it were, from the bitter bondage in which he had dwelt—fate made her inexorable fiat felt, and he knew that he was in bondage still. The jars of daily life, the grinding discords of antagonistic temperaments forced into constant contact, may be trivialities. But there is a degrading, all-pervading misery about the atmosphere which they create

which lifts them to a position not theirs by right; which sinks the cause in the effect; making them seem themselves the evil of which they are only the result. During the past four months, the rub, the jar, the strain of North Branston's home life—hopelessly wretched before this period set in—had intensified to the last pitch of endurance; it was but natural, therefore, that the personal contact had assumed for North Branston overshadowing proportions; that he should look upon the cutting off of that contact as the very cutting of the Gordian knot. It was in this assurance that he had made all his arrangements for leaving Alnchester. It was in this assurance, and with that sense of calm well-being before alluded to, that the first few days of his freedom had gone by.

Whence there had come to him the vague consciousness that that freedom was indeed an affair of externals only; through what sense there dawned upon him a consciousness of the chain still about him, he could not have said. He brought the consciousness one day from Mrs. Vallotson's presence, and it never left him again. It grew steadily and inexorably. The chain, from being a mere shadowy possibility, became an ever-present weight, pressing relentlessly upon his inmost consciousness, to be removed or lightened by no human effort. His visits to Mrs. Vallotson's sick-room were few. But each seemed to be endowed with a power stretching far beyond the limits of the brief moments he spent in her company, and to rivet the chain faster and faster. She hated him, and he realised her hatred—realised it now that it stood shorn of all the dust and clamour of conflict and clash, as he had never done before. She hated him. Poisonous as is all hatred; and it is a terrible truth that it is not less poisonous to the hated than to the hater; there was something about the irrepressible repulsion that he still touched in her—something mysterious, unnatural, unexplained—which exercised a subtle influence over him. It created in him, involuntarily, almost against his will, a horrible reflection of itself. It penetrated him through and through; withering every natural healthy impulse; stultifying all his ambitions; nourishing nothing that was not cynical and hard. The tangible bondage which lay behind had been bitter; compared with the intangible bondage that had succeeded it, it had been ease.

North Branston and Mrs. Vallotson met only once more before his departure, and

then they met to part. But few words passed on either side; words chill and formal. The man went out into the world to do his own work in his own way; the woman remained in her husband's home. And the chain remained unbroken.

## HOLBORN.

BEWILDERMENT is the only word for the attitude of one—not necessarily a visitor from another world; or one who has been "put away" for a series of years; or your country parson who, like Mr. Penley's famous impersonation, does not like London; but a regular cockney whose walks abroad have not recently lain in that direction—as he is set down by the statue at Holborn Circus. We don't seem to know these broad streets that radiate from this crowded centre, nor the buildings of florid aspect that contrast so strangely with the unpretentious dwellings of an earlier Holborn, and a dim vision of the past rises before the eyes.

'Tis thirty years ago, and here is Holborn Hill,  
The heavy hill called Holborn,  
Up which hath been many a sinful soul borne,

in days still more remote, that is, when "to be drawn backwards up Holborn Hill" was a genteel periphrasis for going to be hanged at Tyburn. But now it is a question of going down it with the roar of traffic sounding like a mighty cataract; and we seem to watch the omnibuses as they make the steep descent, and how the "cad" descends from his monkey perch and adroitly fits on the iron slipper to the stout hind wheel, and is on behind again without delaying the progress of the vehicle, which now grinds heavily over the muddy cobblestones into the dark valley below. Strange faces with strange headgear peep out from that old-fashioned 'bus with its diminutive windows and practicable door, the bang from which starts the horses after a stoppage; pretty faces mostly framed with bandeaux of smooth bright hair; stout, whiskered men look down from the knife-boards. And then the whole faded dingy scene disappears, and to-day is upon the screen once more, with bright sunshine and a world rolling briskly to and fro over the easiest of gradients.

But the valley below is still in existence, a sort of basement floor where markets are carried on, and where trades of all kinds are flourishing. And Snow Hill is also to the fore, and actually the "Saracen's Head,"

as large as life, but quite a palatial affair to what it must have been in Mr. Squeers's time. Here, too, is a fragmentary end of Shoe Lane, which we know well enough at the Fleet Street end, but which we did not expect to meet down here. And a pleasant shady place it is on a broiling day, too deep down for the sun to penetrate; while overhead in the flare and glare all the world goes by on the grand viaduct. Humble as is its name, Shoe Lane is one of the most ancient and distinguished of London's early streets, and is closely allied with Holborn, which is itself of high antiquity. Not perhaps of the very highest antiquity, for the Roman road passed near the city on higher ground to the north, along the line of Old Street, and so on towards Colchester. But ere Fleet Street had come into existence, and when the Strand was but the pebbled margin of the river bed; while galleys lay moored in the Fleet off Ludgate Stairs, and all round was wild forest, with moors and fennish wastes; the one practicable way out of the city towards the west was by Holborn Bridge, which crossed the tidal creek; and then if you were for the Court or Abbey you took the winding track which was even then known as Showell, or Shoe Lane. The main road was carried straight up Holborn Hill, which with its pleasant sunny aspect was bright with gardens and noble mansions. Here, early in the fourteenth century the then Bishop of Ely began to build a stately house for the see, his successor added vineyard, garden, and orchard, and in that garden were grown the strawberries which Shakespeare, following Hollinshed, has made famous. Says King Richard the Third:

My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,  
I saw good strawberries in your garden there.  
I do beseech you send for some of them.

Well, here is Ely Place, the site of the old palace, still a kind of guarded precinct, with gates and a porter in uniform, who frowns sternly on small boys who might be disposed to make a playground of the quiet precincts. Yet the place is by no means deserted even by the fashionable world, and dainty carriages may be seen driving up with clients for the famous solicitors of the place. And if you are from the Cape, with a hatful of diamonds, you may find a customer in Ely Place, to say nothing of dealers in plate, in bronzes, and "articles of vertu." In curious contrast to the tall dull houses of brick is the venerable chapel of St. Ethelburga, which by some happy accident was preserved when the rest of the

episcopal buildings were demolished. Passing along a cool shaded cloister, one enters the sacred edifice, and in a moment mediæval times are come again. A gracefully proportioned Gothic chapel is here, with shafts and mouldings that bear the stamp of antiquity; while the faint perfume of incense, the gilded shrines, the images of saints and martyrs, the altar richly adorned for the services of the ancient rite, are strangely appropriate to their mediæval setting. The dim religious light from the rich painted windows falls upon a few kneeling figures—here an old woman in cloak and poke bonnet, there a workman in fustian with his basket of tools by his side. In the crypt beneath, the illusion is still more perfect. The Rembrandtesque gloom of the interior; the wide stone columns supporting massive oaken beams; the lights burning dimly here and there before some shrine or altar; and in one corner a flare of light where some bearded workmen, who might have come out of the canvas of some old Dutch master, are busy with the inner works of a "payre of organs;" all this with the clatter of Holborn sounding in the distance, gives the thrill of something delightfully strange and unexpected.

Coming into the glare of the nineteenth century once more, here is Hatton Garden with the Italian Church conspicuous at the end. And this is in truth the site of the Bishop's strawberry ground, which Queen Elizabeth got for her favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton, him of the "bushy beard and shoe-strings green," with

His high-crowned hat and satin doublet,  
who built a new house in the old pleasure. By the way, the Bishop, who was shamefully bullied by the Queen into giving away his garden grounds, stipulated that he might gather "twenty baskets of roses a year" from what was now Hatton's Garden. But Sir Christopher did not get much good from his plunder. He came to grief over his building transactions, and died broken-hearted at Ely Place, where a couple of centuries earlier old Gaunt gave up the ghost.

Words, life, and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

But as a street, Hatton Garden dates from the Commonwealth, when the palace was used as a prison and the grounds about were laid out for building. The old house survived till the eighteenth century, and its ancient hall was used at one time by the serjeants-at-law. It had a fine brick gateway opening upon Holborn, where now stands the porter's humble lodge.

Crossing the road, another old landmark is to be found in the bewilderment of Holborn Circus. There—with its foundation some little distance below the level of the present street, but towering above the lowlier streets beyond—stands the church of St. Andrew's, Holborn; where a fine sycamore, with its roots in the old burying-ground, affords a pleasant refuge from the broiling sunshine. Here, on the churchyard wall, porters rest their loads; and an occasional passer-by may pause to notice the quaint, secluded building, which was just spared by the great fire, but was all tumbling to pieces, when it was eventually rebuilt under Wren's directions. Of Wren's time, doubtless, is the round-headed archway that opens into the charnel house beneath; and so also must be the quaint bas-relief representing the resurrection, with angels blowing trumpets from the clouds that fail to wake any reverberations from Holborn Circus. Yet what a crowd might issue from that gloomy portal! Forgotten City fathers with ink-horns hanging to their girdles; priests with the tonsure; Dr. Sacheverel in a full-bottomed wig; old dramatists such as Webster, of the Duchess of Malfy, in his gown as parish clerk; actors, too, and poets; Chatterton, pale and despairing; and Henry Neele, a forgotten bard of the Law Courts, who died by his own hand, and lies buried here; Strutt, too, of the "Sports," that excellent antiquary and engraver; and John Emery, the actor, whose Yorkshire Tyke was the admiration of the early nineteenth century.

Close by is Thavie's Inn, also a nice quiet spot, formerly an Inn of Chancery. Thavie was an armourer of the time of Edward the Third—probably a Welshman and in all likelihood a "Davie," and perhaps the original Taffy of English prejudice. There were plenty of Welshmen in Holborn in the days of the Plantagenets. They would lie in wait for your worship strutting down from your Inn towards the Court, and offer cheeses of the kind they called Talgar at less than market prices and without paying the City dues. The City bailiffs would run them in if they caught them, and generally kept a sharp look-out for forestallers and regratters and people with a taste for bargains. Thus, in 1375, one day after dinner, John Clerk, a poulterer, met John Spencer "with twenty-two geese in Holborne when coming to the city," and forthwith bought the whole flock. He was adjudged a forestaller, and the

geese were forfeited to the use of the sheriff, so that there would be a rare goose pie at the next City feast.

And this reminds us that we are coming to the old City octroi boundary—the Holborn Bars—which, in a warrant of Henry the Fifth, is called the Bar of the Old Temple of London. For it will be remembered that the Knights Templars had their original seat just here, about the site of Staple Inn. This last is still happily in existence—one of the rarest bits of old London, with its charming timber frontage to the street and its pleasant quadrangle and gardens within. It is no longer an inn, indeed. The ancient foundation was sold for a price, and parted among those who ought to have preserved it; and its present guardian is the great insurance company on the other side of the way, who it is to be hoped will spare it for the sake of future generations.

Almost opposite is Furnival's Inn—a quiet, business-like precinct, devoted chiefly to solicitors, as it was in Mat Prior's time, who writes of his early prospects at his uncle's tavern:

Or sent me with ten pounds to Furnival's Inn, to some good rogue attorney.

Below the Inn are some good old-fashioned London taverns, which were of note in the old coaching days—the "Black Bull," with its famous old sign, which seems to have been the scene of Mrs. Gamp's ministrations to the sick stranger; and the "Old Bell" adjoining, which is one of the most perfect survivals of the coaching and family hotels of the last century still left to us, with its quaint courtyard, its galleries, and wainscoted parlours.

Brook Street, a little higher up, has also its memories. Here lived and practised one Mr. Salkeld, an attorney, whose clerk, young Philip Hardwick—whom Mrs. Salkeld would send out to bring home meat and vegetables in the official blue bag—eventually became Lord Chancellor, and founded a great and wealthy family on the profits of his office. And hither came Chatterton, one of the brightest geniuses of his time, to starve for a while in a garret, and end his misery by poison. Ere yet it was a street, Brook House stood upon its site, where lived Greville Lord Brook, "the friend of Sydney, and no mean favourite of Queen Elizabeth, but who was here slain by one Hayward, a gentleman of his household, who killed himself with the same blood-stained sword." But the Brook Street of to-day has little to say to any of its former



associations. It is high, it is monumental; a poet would look for a garret there in vain.

But Leather Lane! Here is another epoch, another world almost. The houses almost meet above your head. A jolly, laughing crowd is in full possession of the narrow footway, and of so much of the roadway as is clear of the costers' barrows. Here are fruits and vegetables of all kinds, plentiful and cheap, with flowers, too, and actually a barrow-load of roses. A man is lading them out with a basket: "Here y' are, a penny a basket;" and people throng to buy them. "I'll have a hapronful," says a stout, jolly dame. The roses are a little tarnished—the spoils of some aristocratic fête perhaps—the urchins pick them up and pelt one another. Swarthy Italians stand at the doorways of the image shops; dark-eyed Contadini show their pearly teeth in smiles. Yes, there are happy moments to be had about Holborn.

Then there is the Gray's Inn Road, that has hardly a feature in common with the Lane we used to know, except the dingy backs of the old houses of the Inn. The tramcars, too, that hail for Hampstead or Stamford Hill, seem something new and strange for Holborn. Another moment brings us to the quiet squares and gardens of Gray's Inn, the trees under whose shadows Bacon took the air—he has left his footprint on the gravel walks, says Elia—and the favourite walk of many a thoughtful student of the law. It is a pleasant scene that might surely be made more accessible to the public. It is Gray's Inn as having once belonged to the Grays of Wilton, and formed part of the manor of Portpool, the memory of which still survives in Portpool Lane close by. It is all very quiet and business-like now about Gray's Inn, but there were masques and revels there in the old times, and the old hall witnessed the last of these gay scenes no later than in 1773, on the elevation of Mr. Talbot to the wool-sack. After an elegant dinner, every member of each mess had a flask of claret besides the usual allowance of port and sack. The benchers then all assembled in the great hall, and a large ring was formed round the fireplace, when the master of the revels taking the Lord Chancellor by the right hand, he with his left took Mr. Justice Page, who, joined to the other serjeants and benchers, danced about the coal fire, according to the old ceremony, three times, while the ancient song accom-

panied with music was sung by one Toby Aston, dressed as a barrister.

Holborn still abounds in book shops, and we may remember that in Gray's Inn Gate once stood the shop of Jacob Tonson, Pope's genial Jacob, the resort of all the wit and wisdom of the age, and frequented by the fops and fine ladies as well as by the literati of the period. In Holborn, too, a couple of centuries ago might have been found, next to Furnival's Inn, a school of cookery conducted by one Edward Kidder, styling himself pastry master, but whose recipes embrace the whole scheme of the rising art.

It is High Holborn beyond the Gray's Inn Gate, a thoroughfare of handsome width, that many people may remember as almost choked by a row of houses, tumbledown but picturesque, with a nice shady passage at the back, a veritable bazaar, with plenty of old bookstalls and odd-and-end shops for the happy lounge. Middle Row was pulled down in 1868, an important event in Holborn's life history only surpassed by the opening of the Holborn Viaduct in great state by the Queen in the following year. A few more dates on the backward track of time may give us a just idea of the ancient fame of Holborn. In 1841, indeed, there had been a great reparation of the road, which before had often been but a quagmire. Then it was widened in 1674, repaired 1431—a few stones may have been put down between whiles—and as old Stow saith, it was first paved in 1417, when people were lavish with the gold they had acquired in the French wars. But there are more ancient "*Billae pro reparatione Vicorum de Alegate et Holborne*" in 1338 and 1353.

A little further on we come to Kingsgate Street, notable as the residence of the world-famous Saurey Gamp. There is still a barber's shop in the street with a striped pole, the whilom ensign, perhaps, of Paul Sweedlepipes, and the general features of the place have not changed much since Mr. Pecksniff's visit—how many years ago? As an antiquity the street is also noticeable, as here was actually the King's gate, by which he entered his private road, as to which we may quote a deposition of 1684. Andrew Lawrence, Surveyor of His Majesty's Highways, says that "His Majesty and his predecessors time out of mind have had a private way on the back side of Holbourne and Gray's Inn, and soe through Finsbury Fields to Kingsland," and as the

Stuart Kings used to drive that way to Theobalds by Cheshunt, it acquired the name of Theobalds Road, which a bit of the way has still retained as a London street. Doubtless it was the old Roman highway, deserted by the general line of traffic, which was thus utilised by their Majesties.

For a good many centuries now, Holborn has lost its aristocratic savour. In 1657 Howel, the chronicler of the Restoration, passing up Holborn sees Southampton House in course of destruction, and remarks how "Jupiter breaks great vessels and makes small ones of the pieces," but the site still retains the name of Southampton Buildings, and has a gateway into Staple Inn. The house was built by Wriothesley, Lord Southampton, Henry the Eighth's Lord Chancellor, a great torturer of heretics. The Southampton Row and Street in High Holborn commemorate a more recent lordship. And when, in Dr. Johnson's time, Evelina came to lodge over a hosier's shop in Holborn, she was a little bit ashamed to give her fine friends the address of such an unfashionable quarter. But your country cousin need not look for "lodgings to let" in Holborn just now, and as time goes on and one stately building rises after another, our old Holborn will form the commencement of a grand thoroughfare, far more imposing than its ancient rival of the Strand.

### PAPER.

ONE of the most remarkable features of modern times is the enormous increase in the consumption of paper. It has been said that the stage of civilisation at which any nation has arrived may be gauged, with some degree of accuracy, by its consumption of soap; and whatever truth there may be in this, the same may, with perfect justice, be said of paper. And not only in its primary, and, so to speak, legitimate, use for literary purposes—writing and printing—does this hold good, but also in the multiplicity of various minor ways in which paper is turned to account. Of late years, indeed, paper has begun to occupy a unique position in the industrial world as a plastic and adaptable material eminently suited, after undergoing various manipulative processes, for a vast and ever-increasing multitude of uses.

When the world was young, in the infancy of literature, men committed their

rude writings to the rough-and-ready materials provided by nature, which needed little or no preparatory processes. The bark and leaves of trees, hides already prepared for domestic use, fragments of pottery, sufficed in primitive ages. The Greeks and Romans advanced to tablets covered with wax, but by-and-by the advancing needs of literature and commerce were served by papyrus, with which Egypt for centuries supplied that circumscribed portion of the world which was so far advanced as to require stores of writing materials. There is no evidence that papyrus was grown for commercial purposes outside of Egypt during the whole Roman period, and the industry of its growth and manufacture must have been a large and profitable one. In the time of Tiberius a sedition was nearly caused by a scarcity of paper, and a rebellious paper-maker, in the days of Aurelian, boasted that he could equip an army from the profits of his business—and did it too.

Parchment was invented by the Greeks when papyrus was scarce, and the Middle Ages re-invented it. There is evidence that linen rags were used in paper-making as early as the eighth and ninth centuries. In paper of that period the fibre was chiefly linen, with traces of cotton, hemp, and other fibres. The known specimens are of Oriental origin, and appear to have been clayed, like modern papers, the material used being a starch paste manufactured from wheat. The oldest MS. written on cotton paper in England is in the British Museum, and dates from 1049 A.D., and the oldest on the same material in the Paris National Library is dated 1050. In 1085 the Christian successors of the Spanish Saracens made paper of rags instead of raw cotton, which had been formerly employed.

Nowadays very little paper is made from the good old linen rags which used to suffice for the greater part of the manufacture. Bank of England notes are made from the best linen—not, however, in the form of rags, but quite new and unused. The finest handmade papers, used almost entirely for the production of "éditions de luxe" and similar high-class book work, and some finer kinds of writing papers, are all that are now made from rags. The supply of this form of raw material would now, in fact, be utterly inadequate to meet the ever-increasing demands of consumption. But fortunately—in one sense—for litera-

ture, and the other paper-using departments of modern life, there is no lack of raw material: less perfect, it is true, but still suitable enough to fill the gap. With the ever-increasing demand, new substances, strange enough some of them, which would have been looked on in the old-fashioned days of the paper trade as utterly impracticable and ridiculously impossible, have been brought into requisition. The changed conditions have necessitated a much more extended and intimate application of chemical science. Without its aid advance would have been impossible, and a state of matters might have ensued too terrible to contemplate.

As a matter of practical experience, paper can be manufactured out of almost anything that can be pounded into pulp. It is said that over fifty kinds of bark are now used, and among other matters which have been found applicable are banana skins, bean-stalks, pea-vines, cocoanut fibre, clover, timothy hay, straw, sea and freshwater weeds, and numerous grasses. The incongruous list may be further swelled by hair, fur, wool, asbestos—which furnishes an article indestructible by fire—hop-plants, and husks of every kind of grain. Leaves make good strong paper; the husks and stems of Indian corn have been tried; and almost every kind of moss can be utilised. There are patents for making paper from sawdust and shavings, from thistles and thistledown, from tobacco-stalks and tan-bark. Nothing apparently comes amiss to the pulping mill, though naturally vegetable fibres are most easily workable and yield the best results. The most largely used of the newer, though comparatively legitimate raw materials, are esparto grass and wood pulp.

As an interesting experiment, the proprietors of an important American newspaper recently undertook to show in how short a time the whole process of paper-making and printing could be accomplished. The undertaking started with a poplar tree in its natural situation in the forest, and the problem was to have it converted into pulp and paper, and sold in the streets as a printed journal, in the shortest possible time. To chop and strip the necessary quantity of wood and load it in a boat took three hours; manufacturing the pulp occupied twelve hours; making the pulp into paper took five hours; transporting the manufactured paper to the newspaper office, eighty minutes; while to finish up with, on the paper thus produced at utmost

speed, one thousand copies of the journal were printed in ten minutes, making in all for the whole process, from inception to completion, just twenty-two hours.

But this remarkable all-embracing power of the paper-mill is not without its drawbacks. Though, as has been already noted, in one sense fortunate, in another it is not, with respect to literature at least. It has been pointed out by M. Delisle, librarian of the Bibliothèque Nationale, that paper is now made of such inferior materials that it will soon rot, and very few of the books now published have the chance of a long life. The books of the present day will all have fallen to pieces before the middle of next century. The genuine linen rag paper was really calculated to last, and even the oldest books printed on it, if kept with due care, show very little of the effect of time; but the wood pulp paper now largely used, in the making of which powerful acids have been employed, is so flimsy that the very ink corrodes it, and time alone, with the most careful handling, will bring on rapid decay. Perhaps from one point of view this is not altogether an unalloyed misfortune. Only remnants of present day literature will survive for the information of future generations, and great national collections, such as that in the British Museum Library, formed at great expense, and intended to be complete and permanent, will offer to the literary historian of, say, the twenty-first century, but a heterogeneous mass of rubbish, physical laws thus consigning to oblivion a literature of which but a tithe is intellectually worthy to survive. The paper-maker thus unwittingly assumes the function of the great literary censor of the age. His criticism is mainly destructive, and it is too severe. Without the power of selective appreciation, he condemns to destruction good and bad alike.

Mulhall, in his "Dictionary of Statistics," puts the world's total consumption of paper in 1882 at one million and fifty thousand tons; this quantity being the product of nearly four thousand mills, employing over a quarter of a million of hands and capital exceeding sixty-two million pounds. The largest quantity of the paper made is consumed by printers, Mulhall's estimate being four hundred and fifty-five thousand tons; and, as writing-paper takes up an additional one hundred thousand tons, it follows that literature, in its widest application, absorbs half the paper made. Curiously enough, the same authority gives the next place to wall-

paper, which accounts for no less than two hundred thousand tons. Production has, of course, gone on increasing, and later estimates put the consumption at three thousand million pounds annually. On working out the average annual consumption of each paper-using country, it is found that each inhabitant of the United Kingdom uses about twelve pounds a year; each Frenchman, about eight and a half; each German, nine; each Australian, six; each Italian, about four; each Austrian, three and one-third; each Spaniard, two; each Russian, one and one-fifth; and each inhabitant of the United States, ten and one fifth.

In those statistics no account is taken of the enormous quantities of paper which are made and consumed in such Eastern countries as China, Japan, and Corea, where it enters into the daily life of the people to a degree that it has not yet reached in Western countries. The peculiar indigenous civilisation of these countries has developed the paper industry along curious lines, and the Coreans are even said to excel the Chinese and Japanese in the multifarious ways in which they use it. Their paper is made from the bark of a bush of the mulberry order, and has special qualities of toughness and durability, which render it suitable for many purposes. The windows of Corean houses are formed of wooden latticed frames covered with paper, transparent enough to admit light. The floors are covered with oil-paper a quarter of an inch thick. Lanterns, fans, and tobacco-pouches are made of paper; and a very thick kind is used for making trunks and packing-boxes. The huge, conical rain-hats; which form such a curiously prominent part of the native attire, and are fastened over the ordinary black hat in wet weather; are made of oil-paper, and large waterproof coats are made of the same material.

The process of paper-making consists essentially in the matting or felting together in a compact mass of fibres, mainly of vegetable origin. The final aim of the various preliminary processes is the production of a fluid pulp of uniform consistency and freed from foreign matters, and when this pulp is spread out in thin sheets, from which the water is drained away, ordinary writing or printing paper is the result. But the pulp, instead of being spread out, may be moulded into any desired shape, and if subjected to sufficient pressure and thoroughly dried, the material becomes as hard as the hardest wood, may be worked with tools as easily as wood, takes

polish or paint excellently, and, unlike wood, is almost indestructible by damp and other atmospheric influences. The plasticity of the raw pulp and the strength and durability of articles, large or small, made from it, account for the many industrial novelties in which paper performs such an important part.

When a strong fibre is used, the pulp can be transformed into a substance so hard that it can scarcely be scratched, and capable of serving many of the ends for which iron and steel are employed. In Germany and in the United States railway carriage wheels made of it are found to be more durable than iron. All the wheels of Pullman cars are said to be made of paper; but the statement sometimes made, that they are entirely composed of it, is erroneous. The paper which forms part of the wheel is not visible, as it is covered with iron and steel, forming only the body of the wheel in the form of a block four inches thick, round which there is a steel rim of two or three inches in thickness. This steel rim comes in contact with the rails, and circular iron plates are bolted on to cover the sides.

This application is a severe test; but perhaps one still more severe is the manufacture of horseshoes from paper. These have been found in Germany to be a great success, and they have been adopted for shoeing the horses of the German cavalry and artillery regiments. They are made of layers of parchment-like paper, cemented together by a special paste, and compressed by hydraulic power. The shoes thus constructed are impervious to water, and being more elastic than the ordinary kind, are said to improve the horse's walk and afford a very secure foothold.

There are indications that paper may even become the building material of the future. The "Hospital" some time ago gave a description of a new and portable hospital made entirely of compressed paper, large enough to hold twenty beds, and so light and compact as to form, when taken down, a load for no more than three trucks, which are so planned as to form the basis of the building when erected. Floors, walls, ceilings, and doors are all made of compressed paper boards, each part numbered, so that the whole can be taken down or built up in an hour or two. The windows are made of wire gauze coated with transparent celluloid. The whole being varnished, is well adapted to cleanliness; and the building, which hails from the United States, is designed for temporary work in fever-stricken districts.



In Bergen there is a church built entirely of paper. It has been rendered waterproof by a solution of quicklime and other ingredients, and will seat a thousand people in comfort.

The papier-maché dome of the new Observatory building at Greenwich is the largest application of this material for roofing purposes which has yet been made in this country. The whole roof, including the steel framework, weighs over twenty tons, and in any other material would have weighed much more. The necessary lightness for a purpose such as this, where the whole roof has to be capable of being revolved by mechanical means under the direct control of the observer, and by the expenditure of the smallest possible amount of energy on his part, has not been attained by the sacrifice of any strength.

A Breslau manufacturer has even built a factory chimney, fifty feet high, of blocks or bricks made of compressed paper pulp, joined together with silicious cement.

It is thus evident that there is no serious obstacle, in a constructive sense, to the extended use of paper for house construction, and as a building material it possesses numerous advantages. The properly prepared compressed paper boards are not nearly so inflammable as wood, and by chemical means they can be rendered absolutely fireproof, or the pulp of which they are formed may in the first instance be made of incombustible substances, such as asbestos. Paper is likewise waterproof, or can be made so very readily by saturation with asphalt, or in many other ways. It is a bad resonator, and consequently well adapted to prevent the passage of sound, and more especially is it a bad conductor of heat, while it is less affected by changes of temperature than any other commonly used building material.

An outline of one process for preparing paper pulp for the manufacture of building material will suffice to show the curiously heterogeneous mixture from which wonderfully strong, light, and durable building stuff is produced. Any ordinary stock used for paper-making may be employed, and during the course of its manipulation there is added to the pulp a solution consisting of one part of starch, one part of gum-arabic, one part of bichromate of potash, and three parts of benzine, to forty-four parts of pulp. The paper made from this combination is coated with a cement made of linseed oil and glue, and is then kept under heat and pressure for a week, so that the boards may

become thoroughly cured and seasoned. The secondary ingredients and their proportions may be varied according to the precise nature of the finished product desired and the application intended to be made of it, and it is within the bounds of possibility that the time may come when not only the outer walls of houses but all their internal fittings and constructive decorations—doors and window frames, mantelpieces, ceilings, and so on—will be made of paper, replacing wood to a great extent, and advantageously in many respects—notably in the entire absence of warping or shrinking from heat, and cold, and damp. For decorative purposes a material known as “carton pierre,” or stone paper, is largely used where strength and toughness are desired. Its preparation and manipulation are so simple as to be within the reach of the amateur decorator, as it is made from paper cuttings boiled with glue, flour, plaster of Paris, and whiting, and then moulded into any desired shape.

There is nothing to prevent paper, prepared as indicated, from being manufactured into furniture and household articles of every description. Black walnut picture-frames are made of it, and are so coloured as to be indistinguishable from the genuine wood. In Paris there has been exhibited a piano, of which the entire case was made of compressed paper, the hard surface of which exhibited a brilliant cream-white polish, richly ornamented with arabesques and floral designs, and painted with miniature medallions. A well-known industrial journal recently gave its readers full instructions for the building of organs, all the pipes of which could be made of paper if so desired.

The Berlin fire department recently received a remarkable addition to its equipment in the form of a fire-engine, the carriage of which is entirely built of paper. Body, wheels, poles, and all the rest are beautifully finished, and while in every respect equal to wood, the weight is considerably less—a point of much importance in such a construction, securing greater promptness in reaching the seat of a fire.

In France beakers and laboratory vessels, capable of withstanding acids, are now made of paper—the pulp from which they are produced containing eighty-five per cent. of wood and fifteen per cent. of rags. After being dried, the newly-moulded vessels are put in a closed cylinder in connection with an air pump, by means of which the air is

drawn out of the pores, which are then filled by a varnish of resins, ether, and oils, while subsequent chemical processes to which they are subjected render them fairly strong, flexible, and impermeable to liquids. After this it is not surprising to find that paper gas-pipes are now being made. The material used for this purpose is Manila paper, cut into strips equalling in width the length of pipe to be made. These are passed through a bath of melted asphalt, and then wrapped firmly round an iron core until the required thickness is attained. Powerful pressure is next applied, the outside surface is strewn over with sand, and the whole cooled in water. The core is then removed, and the outside of the pipe coated with a waterproof composition. These pipes are said to be perfectly gas-tight, and to be much cheaper than iron pipes. Possibly the adoption of paper in some form for the manufacture of water-pipes might save householders some of the annoyance arising from the bursting of pipes after frost. An ingenious individual is reported to have made tobacco pipes from paper, by moulding from pulp or by pressing superimposed sheets of absorbent paper into shape. In either case the necessary resistance to burning has to be provided for by lining the bowl with porous earthenware.

So far has the adaptation of paper to peculiar uses gone in the United States that paper boats are to be tried in the navy. The material is so treated, that it is claimed that the boats may be submerged indefinitely without being any the worse, while they are as much as fifty per cent. lighter than the ordinary wooden boats. In the States, also, they are said to be making paper telegraph-poles, which are vastly superior to wooden ones in their power of resisting the deteriorating influences of the atmosphere and the ravages of insects.

A Swedish engineer has invented a paper match, and it has been proposed, if not actually tried, to substitute a preparation of paper for the wood of lead pencils, to supply the deficiency in the supply of cedar wood now being felt. Artificial teeth have been made from paper, and have been found to wear well. In Germany a great trade is done in paper bed-quilts, which are said to be very warm and much cheaper than the ordinary kind, and another German invention takes the shape of paper stockings. These are made of a specially-prepared paper stock, and it is claimed for them that they have a very beneficial action on perspiring feet, absorbing the moisture as fast as it is

formed and so keeping the feet dry and warm. The equable temperature they aid in maintaining in the shoes is said to be a great preventive of colds.

The ingenuity of the paper-maker, on the whole applied beneficially in all these and many other curious and remarkable directions, has lent itself, in at least one way, to deception. The American genius, so fruitful in trade tricks, has matched its wooden hams and artificial coffee-beans by paper hosiery yarns. The audacious inventor has devised means by which he can form a strand of paper, polish it, give it a covering of woollen fibre, knit it into goods, and then palm it off on the hosiery trade. It so closely resembles genuine good woollen yarn, that at sight deception is easy. But use rapidly exposes the deceit. The goods fall to pieces as soon as they become damp, and they cannot stand any wear. They are, in fact, yarn only in appearance.

A curiosity worth noting here is the production of iron paper, as a "tour de force" of iron manufacture. A specimen was exhibited in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and forthwith ironmakers entered into a lively rivalry as to the thinness to which iron could be rolled. Sheets were rolled to the average thickness of one-eighteenth-hundredth part of an inch, which is much thinner than tissue paper, as one thousand two hundred sheets of the thinnest tissue paper made measure an inch. These iron sheets were perfectly smooth and easy to write on, though they were porous when looked at against a strong light.

This necessarily brief outline of a large subject would be incomplete without some reference to some of the remarkable transformations which paper or its raw materials undergo by the application of chemical science. Celluloid, a comparatively new product, which enters largely into commerce in an immense variety of articles of use and ornament, is made directly from paper by transforming the cellulose of which it is mainly composed into gun cotton by saturating it with a mixture of sulphuric and nitric acids. After thorough washing the mass is reduced to pulp, and mixed with twenty to forty per cent. of its weight of camphor, and thoroughly ground up. The pulp is spread out in thin sheets, which are subjected to great pressure until dry, when they are rolled in heated rollers, from which they come out in elastic sheets capable of being worked up in an endless number of forms. A process for the making of artificial silk by a complicated succession of

chemical and mechanical manipulations from the ordinary wood pulp from which many kinds of paper is made, has recently come into prominence, and promises to develop into a successful industry. By the potent alchemy of chemistry acetic acid can be made from paper pulp, and sugar from old linen rags.

"IF!"

If you were sitting talking to me there,  
     There—in that chair;  
 If I were watching your dear face—your face  
     So passing fair;  
 Holding your hands in mine, my joy would be  
     A perfect thing;  
 And my glad heart within my breast would thrill  
     And lilt and sing;  
 As some sad bird who thinks her nestlings gone,  
     Flutters and cries,  
 Then finds them 'neath a hiding-place of leaves,  
     And sorrow dies,  
 The while her clear song rises to the sky  
     In ecstasies!

### THE CLASSICS IN EDUCATION.

WHEN one is told, as one has been told, that some of those who were most prominent in the recent affair with Lobengula's followers in Matabeleland were men who were refused admission to Sandhurst and to Woolwich because of their imperfect acquaintance with Latin and with Greek, one pauses to consider. One wonders if, in refusing them, our military authorities were not guilty of a blunder. Suppose the wheel of fashion were to take a twirl, and, before our citizens were allowed to fight the battles of their native land, it should be considered indispensable that they should have a colloquial knowledge of the extinct tongues of the Aztec races. Should we not think such a requirement a little arbitrary, pedantic, absurd? And it is not clear that for an officer Latin and Greek are so very much more necessary than Aztec. It is, to a large degree, an affair of literary sentiment. Probably when the moment of imminent danger does come, and our troops are in instant need of competent commanders, the theory that a classical education is an indispensable part of a commanding officer's equipment will be shown to be purely pedagogic.

When we point out that few of the generals who fought and won the great battles which have gone to make the history of the world were, in the scholastic sense, educated at all, we are reminded, with somewhat unnecessary persistence, that during the last generation the con-

ditions of warfare have entirely changed. Moltke is cited as the up-to-date type of successful general; the man who was a soldier and student to his finger-tips. It is suggested, inferentially, that the men who did before would not do now. But is this quite so certain after all? If a Napoleon Buonaparte were to rise from the ranks again to-morrow, what is the betting that he would not sweep through Europe quite in the old way? It is certain that in the Russo-Turkish war some of the finest feats on both sides were done by men who, scholastically, were most deficient. We laugh at the Chinese system of government by competitive examination. Are we not in danger of carrying the thing to an equally absurd length ourselves?

By all means let our officers be both physical and intellectual giants—if the thing be possible. Whether a capacity for assimilating the dead languages is an inevitable sign of intellectual pre-eminence is, however, an open question. For my part I doubt it. Some men have a natural taste for languages, some for mechanics, some for mathematics, some for chemistry. To various men their several gifts. Why should one gift be held, as a matter of course, to be a sign of intellectual strength rather than another? Why should the great engineer, who could never master even the Latin declensions, be adjudged to be necessarily the mental inferior of the man who breathes in Latin and dreams in Greek?

In this matter we are, after all, in some respects wiser than our fathers. They seem to have denied that a man could have had the education of a gentleman who was not versed both in Latin and in Greek; though he might be, and very often was, versed in nothing else. We do admit that a man may be an educated man who yet cannot for the life of him give you the meaning of a single Homeric line. There are many such who are admitted by the universal voice to be men of light and leading. Still we have not made so much progress as we might and should have done. As witness the refusal of our rulers to admit that soldiers can have sufficient knowledge of their trade to lead us on to victory if, for any cause whatever, they have failed to wrestle with the modern versions of the ancient tongues of Greece and Rome.

In the eyes of some men the suggestion that Greek and Latin may, after all, be educational superfluities is equivalent almost to blasphemy. And yet it is strange how any one who has some acquaintance with the

inner life of our Universities can doubt that it is so. Oxford and Cambridge turn out every year many men who are proficient students of the dead languages, and nothing more. Not a few such continually reside within those halls of ancient learning. Is any one prepared to say that a man who knows Greek and Latin, and practically nothing else, is in any wide and just sense of the word an educated man? If so, it is because there is abroad in the world a very loose idea of what education really means. The man who can talk in Greek as if it were his native tongue is not necessarily any more educated than the man who can perform prodigies in mental arithmetic. The one may be just as much the result of a knack, of a certain intellectual twist, as the other. To suppose that because a man has the language at his finger-tips, and knows it very much better than he does his own, he is, therefore, saturated with the atmosphere of the Greek civilisation, and that, in any laudatory sense of the word, his type of intellect is Greek, is to suppose the purest nonsense. Such an one may be, and not seldom is, the sort of person of whom Wordsworth said that a primrose was to him a primrose and nothing more.

It may be doubted if any one branch of learning has a stronger educational influence than any other—and this although all the dons alive may hold up their hands aghast. Fashion is omnipotent in matters of scholarship as in all else. There are certain things which it is held "*de rigueur*" that a man should know. For instance, a knowledge of classics is considered to be the distinguishing mark of a gentleman. It is less the case to-day than it was yesterday, but still the thing prevails. It is quite on the cards that, in the next century, a knowledge of science may be held to mark the gentleman. But it will not therefore follow that science, any more than Greek or Latin, is an indispensable part of a man's education.

There can be no doubt whatever as to the reason why, in England, the dead languages play such an important part in competitive examinations, and especially in examinations for the army. The average poor man knows better than to spend his money on having his son instructed in useless knowledge. He has him taught only those things which are likely to be of practical use to him in his daily life. On such a list classics certainly find no place. Poor men are not wanted in the army—brains or no brains—with or without fight-

ing capacity. The British army is, as regards its officers, as much a close preserve as it ever was. Those who have the pulling of the strings do their best to keep the poor man out. They may be right, or they may be wrong, but they do it. They know that one of the finest safeguards against the incursion of the poor man's son is the insistence, as a preliminary to all advancement, on an adequate knowledge of the classics. Classics mean pounds, shillings, and pence. The poor man's son being without a satisfactory supply of the one is, therefore, and as a matter of course, without a satisfactory supply of the other. So the poor man's son stays out.

Let us consider for a moment what education is, or rather what it ought to be, and we shall at once perceive the absurdity of an arbitrary pronouncement to the effect that this or that line of study forms an indispensable part of a man's education. We are not all formed in one likeness. As Paul had it, there are diversities of gifts. This is an old story, but it is necessary that it should be continually insisted upon. Where Brown is strong is precisely where Jones is weak. It is an open question whether it is possible to supply Jones from without with that which he has not within him. For instance, people are still disputing as to whether a poet is born or made; as to whether, that is, by means of education you can supply Jones with the poet's gift when, naturally, he has it not. Though the disputants may rage, for my part I am persuaded that you cannot. That which is born with us we have, and that which is not born with us we shall never have; no, not though all the pundits strain themselves in their struggle to give it us. In such a matter, it seems to me that a man can speak best from his own experience; a "human document" is occasionally worth a good deal of loose generalisation. And I know there are things which no man could ever teach me, or ever shall. To take one: with my own unaided hand I never could draw a decently straight line. It is not for want of trying. When I was a lad I used to try, and try, and fail—with bitter tears. My hand and eye together could never convey an idea of form. My attempts at even the elements of drawing have always been ludicrous. In me the reproductive side of the artistic faculty is, wholly and even egregiously wanting; no system of education could ever give it me. On the other hand, I know that things have been born with me



which, unless they are born with a man, I doubt strongly if he will ever have. I have what is really a parrot-like capacity for acquiring languages. "Dump" me in any remote corner of the world you like, leave me in constant intercourse with the natives—be their tongue what it may—and at the end of three months I would undertake, linguistically, to hold my own with the best of them. On leaving them, more than probably at the end of another three months I should have forgotten every word I had acquired. With me, as regards languages, it is distinctly a case of easy come and easy go.

I learned my Latin and Greek abroad. When I was twenty, at a great foreign university, in both tongues I more than held my own; I had a smattering of Hebrew besides. It is some time since I was twenty. I have never looked at a classic author since I went out into the world. I doubt if to-day I could read a page of any Latin writer. I have actually forgotten how to form the characters of the Greek alphabet. As for Hebrew it is with me as though it had never been. More than that, when I was a boy, German was to me as my mother tongue; I wrote and spoke in it as I write and speak in English to-day. Yet when a week or two ago a German friend sent me a German letter, I experienced no slight difficulty in deciphering what appeared to me to be his country's hieroglyphics.

These things are stated in support of the argument that proficiency in Latin and in Greek is no more a sign of intellectual supremacy than is proficiency, say, in French and in German. One man has, naturally, a turn for Greek, just as another has, naturally, a turn for mathematics. From my point of view, any one in his spare moments ought to be able to learn Greek, but the mere thought of mathematics makes me shudder. I regard a mathematician as one of the wonders of the world; while I should be more Greek than were any of the Greeks long before any product of my raising took a prize at a horticultural show. Educationalists, therefore, as it appears to me, should not expend themselves in useless efforts. It is not the part of education to attempt the impossible. Ascertain what a man has, and educate that. Surely the desire to do this ought to be the beginning and the end of education. Every man has something; you may be sure of it, although you may condemn the thing he has because it is not the thing you have.

Education is akin to character. What intellect is is not so clear. One sometimes hears men spoken of as "highly intellectual" who, if one could subject them to some sort of chemical analysis, would prove to be nothing of the kind. Stylus, for example, is an authority on the cuneiform writings. He is on that account regarded as a man of the highest intellect. But, if you once come to know Stylus, you will begin to doubt—and with reason—if he really is what he is supposed to be. The truth is, that the problem of the cuneiform character had an attraction for Stylus's peculiar mental constitution.

There are men who invariably are interested in anything of the nature of a cryptograph. They will display amazing patience and ingenuity in their search for the hidden key. There is, probably, no form of cryptology which, in the end, will baffle their trained natural instinct. Stylus is a man of this type. It happens that he has turned his attention to that branch of cryptology in which kudos is most likely to be gained. As a matter of fact, there are ciphers which are almost, if not quite, as difficult to puzzle out as the key to the cuneiform characters. The men who do puzzle them out are, out of their own line, very often very ordinary individuals. They were, like Stylus, born with a knack in a certain direction, which knack they have educated for all it is worth. But that knack is all they were born with, and that is all they have to-day. Intellect, as apart from instinct, can scarcely be said to come into the story of their lives at all.

The idea that a knowledge of the classics necessarily implies a man of education—in the true sense of education—is based upon a fallacy. The fallacy consists in the perfectly gratuitous supposition that the man who knows Latin and Greek is necessarily in touch with the spirit, the intellect, the height and the depth, the glory of the great extinct civilisations. One might as reasonably say that the man who knows English is, therefore, necessarily in touch with Shakespeare; that the man who knows German is, therefore, necessarily in touch with Goethe; or he who knows Italian, in touch with Dante. As Lord Dunsyre used to exclaim—absurd! Obviously it is at least doubtful whether any man now living is, or can be, in touch with the ancient civilisation, even the echoes of which have long since died away. There may be men, gifted in a rare degree with the faculty of imagination, who may sup-

pose themselves to be in such a position; but they can get no further than the supposition. My own impression is that, if they were to wake to-morrow morning and were to find themselves in Athens in its prime, they would find themselves not only with everything to learn, but with everything to unlearn, too. They would be disillusioned in the twinkling of an eye. Because a man has a journeyman acquaintance with the mere structure of a language, does it follow that he has pinions with which to sweep through the air with Homer, or that he can keep step with Plato? What appreciation has the Italian priest, who perpetually scribbles Latin, of the days and the nights of Horace?

But, says the defender of the classical teaching—which is very far, sometimes, from being the classical learning—think of the literature of Greece and of Rome; can he be called an educated man to whom that literature is non-existent? To this there is, to begin with, one obvious reply: it is one thing to know a literature, it is altogether another to appreciate it, or to have the capacity to appreciate it. There are multitudes of so-called Greek and Latin scholars who are as devoid of the sense of literary perception as the dodo. The man who taught me more Greek than any one else, and whose fame, as a Grecian, was world-wide, cared much more for a trivial and disputable question of grammatical nicety than for the music of a line. Though I have "Paradise Lost" by heart, if I have none of its spirit—worse, if I want none—how does my knowledge avail me? Few men will be prepared to assert that mnemonics, merely as mnemonics, tend to intellectual advancement.

There is another, and, possibly, an even weightier answer to our supposititious defender of the classical teaching. The literature of Greece and of Rome is not the only literature which the world contains. Men are beginning more and more to doubt if it is even the most important literature which the world contains. One may, at least, unhesitatingly affirm that the man who, knowing the literature of Greece and of Rome, knows nothing of the literature of his own country, is, in every sense of the word, less well educated than the man who, knowing the literature of his own country, knows nothing of the literature of Greece and of Rome. It is foul shame to a man that the great intellects of his own land should be to him as strangers. No Greek or Roman worthy of the name

would have allowed such a stain to sully his escutcheon. Unfortunately, the greater a man's knowledge of the older classics the less is his knowledge apt to be of the classics of his native land, whether his native land is England, Germany, or France.

Such an one, not seldom, may be regarded as dead while he still is living. The men who are advocating the study of Greek and of Roman literature, or of any literature, to the prejudice of that of their native land, are doing their best, not for the spreading of education but, for the spreading of ignorance. The time is not far distant when the world will regard such persons as we of the present generation regard the alchemists, as men who spent at least the larger portion of their lives in pursuit of a vain thing. If you must study literature at all, be you peer or pauper—indeed, all the more if you be peer—first study the literature of your own country; then the literature of any other land you please. It is certain that the more you know of your own country and of your own countrymen, and of the great works which your fathers did, the better, and the better educated, citizen you are likely to be.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I would not narrow a student's boundaries. All learning is good. There is nothing, as it seems to me, which it profiteth not a man to know. None of us can learn everything. Most of us can learn but little. It falls to the lot of many of us to learn, so far as books are concerned, just those things which the teachers choose to teach us, and those things only. Everywhere is the child who feels that he is being taught what he would rather not learn, and what it will do him no good to learn. But he cannot speak with an articulate voice. Even if he could, the chances are that he would not be listened to. Think of the myriads who have groaned under the tyranny of the classical learning! How many have had Latin hammered and Greek caned into them? What percentage have profited by what they have suffered? One wonders. Mr. James Payn has told us recently how much his classical education cost in money and in pain, and at what value, now he is in a position to judge, he himself appraises it. I learned Latin and Greek to serve certain private purposes of my own—certainly not for the love of learning them. When those purposes had been served, I forgot what I had learned as quickly as I could, and that was very quickly. My love was in another's

keeping. Latin and Greek profited me nothing. I do not believe they profit one per cent. of those who are compelled to learn them. I do not believe that a thing was ever done in Rome which has not been done better out of it. I do not believe that a line was ever penned in Greece which could not be more than matched elsewhere. And I am persuaded that such is the opinion of untold myriads of human beings who, to their sorrow, at some period or other of their lives, have been in a position to judge.

The moral of it all is this: let there be the widest possible latitude of choice in the things which a child or a youth must learn. Because we have acquired a certain branch of knowledge, and prize it at its full worth, do not let that be a sufficient reason why we should compel some one else to learn it too. Let that some one else have liberty to choose. What we prize may be valueless to him. He may regard our reasons for setting a high price on the thing we have learned as of no account. It is conceded that every one must and should learn something, as much, indeed, as he possibly can. He must learn the three Rs, we are all agreed as far as that; but after we have reached that point, agreement ends. Beyond that, do let us agree upon at least one point—to differ. There may be agreement even in difference; pray let us have it if we can.

As regards the subjects which should be made compulsory at competitive examinations, surely this may be assumed to be a case in which the punishment should be fitted to the crime. There is no ostensible reason why a post office sorter should be compelled to pass an examination in the theory and practice of bridge building. If there are a thousand candidates and one vacancy, which the man with the highest number of marks is to regard as his reward, then if any of the candidates, with a view of adding to the tale of their marks, choose to take up bridge building as an "extra," let them. But use no compulsion if they do not choose. One fails to see of what practical use Latin and Greek will be to an officer on the field of battle, or off the field of battle, for the matter of that. The methods of the ancient warriors are as dead as the warriors who practised them. If they are not, they may be studied, in a thousand and one translations, with perfect ease. What an officer requires is to know how to fight, not only himself, but principally, as it were, by proxy—Latin

and Greek will not teach him to do that. They may be pretty playthings for the leisured man in his leisure moments; certainly they are nothing more. Under existing conditions it seems not unlikely that the great general of the near future will be the man of science. The next great war will, not impossibly, be won in the laboratory. Officers and men alike will be little else than puppets, moved hither and thither in accordance with the chemist's plans. This being so, it is amusing to note how, in the British army, stress is laid upon a knowledge of the classics, while a knowledge of certain branches of science is considered to be of little or no account.

If the young man who wishes to become an officer chooses to take up Latin and Greek, let him. To compel him to do so, if his strength lies in other directions, is an absurdity worthy of the Land of Topsey-turveydom. If you say that, under modern conditions, in the army you want the best intellect, and only that, well and good; by all means get it. Only remember two things. No system of competitive examination that was ever conceived is, or can be, a test of intellect. The man who comes out at the top of the list is not the most intellectual; he is the model pupil of the model crammer, and the master of the best system of mnemonics. Competitive examinations mean, and must mean, cramming; and the art of cramming is a trick, a knack, it has nothing to do with intellect. And, in the second place, superiority in any one branch of study does not necessarily mean intellectual pre-eminence, whether that branch of study be Greek or trigonometry. He who supposes that it does, must either have a very limited experience of men and of affairs, or he must be hide-bound in the traditions of red tape.

If to ensure having good officers we must have competitive examinations, let us spread out our boundaries as wide as we can. Do not let us confine them within the narrowest possible limits. Do not let us say: if you cannot keep five glass balls going in the air at once, you are of no use to us. Let us also consider the man who can drive a sword well home. Let us net all the fish that are worth the netting. Probably at every examination which takes place, some of the men who would serve us best are being sent away. Considering the great cloud of the things which a man could and, if you like, should know, we may lay it down as

a truism that a knowledge of the Latin grammar and of the Greek accents is not an indispensable part of the equipment of a successful officer.

Englishmen on certain points are difficult to move. They like to cherish the belief that all things are going well. Oddly enough they hate to be bothered about the army. The average Englishman is apt to think that there is something occult and beyond his ken in the art of war. Possibly England as a nation will not awake to the absurdity of the system of competitive examination for entrance to the army, as that system is at present conducted, until we are once more face to face with a great national crisis. The Crimean War induced us to a certain extent to set our house in order. It is just possible that another Crimean War will be needed before we can be persuaded to do away with compulsory Latin and Greek.

The classical bogey has been a nightmare to long generations of Englishmen. It is a striking exemplification of the deep-rooted conservatism which is our chief national characteristic, that such a bogey should still be allowed to survive in our army, that our soldiers should still be constrained to wrestle with the nightmare before they can be permitted to fight our battles for us. One may be excused for entertaining a pious hope that, ere long, our rulers will wake from their slumbers, and in what will indeed be the fulness of time, the nightmare will vanish away.

### BLIND LARRY.

#### A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

WHEN I was a boy, no wake or wedding, no fair or pattern dance, was complete without old Larry and his fiddle. Indeed, if he were seen in his frieze tail-coat, and the tall felt hat he bought at Casey's the year of the big snow, unless it were a Holy Day, people asked "Who's wakin'?" or "Who's gittin' married?" And so it was that there were few sights so familiar in Gurteen as old Larry, with the left tail of his coat cocked up at an impossible angle by the fiddle it sheltered, guiding his hesitating steps through the village with his poor, groping hand on his son's shoulder. For old Larry was blind. "The good God give me a pair av' eyes," he would say, "but divil a blink can I see out av' ayther av' thim, glory be to Him. Deed I wouldn't know I had

them at all, ony to put me finger in thim." But he was, at least as I remember him first, quite contented with his lot, and life was full of interest for him. Not that he had many interests; no, not that. He had only one, and that was his son. But every thought, every hope and fear that dwelt in the busy solitude of the blind man's brain centred in the barefooted, ragged urchin whom he never saw, and never could see. I used to think it was all the better that he could not see him, for "The Gossoon," as his father always called him, was not lovely. He had very blue eyes, it is true, that looked all the more blue for being backed by black lashes and hair; and broad, white teeth that quite filled a very large mouth; but the general expression was not such that, to put it leniently, invited unlimited confidence. Besides, I always hated broad, snub noses. I know the one thing old Larry found hardest to bear was that he could not see the Gossoon. I have seen him listen to his voice, no matter to whom he was speaking, with an eager attention that made him hold his breath; and when his hand rested on the boy's ragged shoulder, his long, thin fingers would move softly from time to time half-searching, half-caressing. People said the Gossoon was good to his father, and it seemed so indeed. Every morning on his way to school, he would lead the old man to the corner of the narrow breen that led up to the chapel gate, and leave him there to pass the day on a deformed three-legged stool, playing to chance passers-by, and praying for the soul that threw him a halfpenny. At midday the Gossoon would appear again with both their dinners wrapped in a red handkerchief, and a fire-blackened can he called the "tinny" of sour milk. The handkerchief was spread on old Larry's knees, and the Gossoon handed the tinny when his father said, "Show me the milk, Larry, boy." When that was over he hurried away to be in time for a game of "tip-cat" or "hunt-the-fox" before afternoon school. When he was set free he would take his father and the maimed-looking stool home—unless it were summer, and then the handkerchief and tinny appeared once more. So it seemed just that the Gossoon should enjoy the good opinion of us all and an extra smile from Father Murphy when he met him, and I joined in the verdict until that snowy evening I can still recall so well.

I was hurrying homewards with a freez-



ing gun on my arm, and the darkness was creeping swiftly in over the grey sea, when I passed Larry sitting at his usual post, shivering in the stinging wind. He was huddling his precious fiddle under his old, threadbare coat; and had crossed his arms on his breast that his trembling hands might get some warmth. I thought there was a weary tone in his voice as he answered my greeting with his usual "Good evenin', kindly, yer honour," and I passed, wondering why he still stayed. A minute after I came upon the Gossoon enthusiastically sliding on a pond with a crowd of village boys. He was performing what he called a "duck skeet," to the great admiration of the rest, which consists in sliding in an almost sitting position, and is supposed to represent very adequately a duck that has alighted on a sheet of ice instead of water. Then I made a mistake. Burning with indignation, I went back to where old Larry sat, and as I drew near I thought the spare figure leant forward eagerly to listen; but when I stood by him I saw only the expression of wistful patience I knew so well on his poor, pinched face.

"Your son must be delayed," I said, priding myself on my delicacy; "let me guide you home."

"No, no," he said; "he'll be here in a minute, sure. He won't forget his owld father at all. 'Tis getherin' a handful av sticks he is to bile the supper. God bless him! Thank ye kindly, all the same," he added hastily. But I saw I had hurt him by my offer.

I waited about that night to make sure the Gossoon did come; and, though he soon put in his appearance, from thenceforth I never joined in his praise. But his father never doubted him. He would tell me often of the comfort the boy was and how great his unselfishness in everything. "Sure 'tis he's the good chilt to me," he would say, with tears of thankful joy in his great grey eyes. "'Tis the blissid saints of hiven giv' him! Devil a step can I pick me way on'y for him. But I'll not keep him be me always, it wouldn't be right, God forgive me! Phelim O'Connor, above at the school, tells me he have a great element for book learning, and 'tis in the fourth book he is already. America's the spot for the likes av him, that's handy with head, an' 'tis there I'll send him shortly, with the help av God."

And to do this—to get and save enough to buy an outfit and pay the passage—old Larry begged the day long at his corner,

and trudged many a weary mile to bring music to the dance. Clothed wretchedly in an old tail-coat that was green with age; his corduroy breeches gaping at the knees where once the trim white bone buttons were, and where, still, coarse yarn hung in tags; his tattered grey stockings clumsily patched with bits of cloth and flannel; he would sit by the wayside begging. He knew every one in the village by the sound of their footsteps, and took a gentle pride in greeting us by name before we spoke, so that we might know it. But, in spite of his poor old clothes, there was something attractive in his appearance; for he had the well-cut aquiline features that are not uncommon in the Irish peasantry, and his long white hair gave him a look that was altogether venerable; while the wistful patience in his wide-open grey eyes, that seemed ever to rest on something beautiful in the far distance, lent a strange charm to his pale, worn face. For Larry had been an old man even when he married. His wife had died to give life to the boy he lived for now; but all that is another story.

Time passed on its way, bringing no change to old Larry and the boy, except that the latter grew taller, and sharper-looking, and less to my liking, every day. Yet his father seemed more wrapped up in him than ever, and starved himself to keep him well clothed and fed, tramped further and further afield with his fiddle under his frieze tail-coat. Each day, wet or fine, saw him at his post, and the lilt of his reels followed you down the road until it was lost on the wind that blows in from the sea. He never begged from footsteps he knew, though he often had a coin even from those who passed him every day, for every one had a kindly pity for the "poor dark man." And in all that time, though he knew that the moment was drawing ever nearer when the one ray of light in his life would be taken—when the Gossoon would have to go, and he would be left quite alone in the dark, he never complained or even thought hardly of his lot. He was always as ready as ever to thank "the love av God an' the howly saints" for the blessings he had in his son and in his music.

"Sure, how can I be lonely settin' here?" he said, once in answer to me. "Won't the Gossoon carry me home at sundown, an' until then haven't I me fiddle? Deed, whin the good God put blind eyes in me, He giv' me the devil's own pair av ears, glory be to Him; an' though I can't see to walk the roads, I know ivery step av the

way up an' down the three strings; but 'tis wid me ears I sees the way there."

At last the time for the parting came. For a week before the day he was to sail, the Gossoon sat with his father at the old corner, and the old man would stretch out his hand from time to time to feel his son by him. All the village came to visit them there at some time or other in those last days, and every one tried his best to make it easier for Larry. But he hardly showed that he knew when any one came to talk with him; and it was the Gossoon, who thoroughly enjoyed his popularity as the centre of attraction, that answered the condolences, bragging of the great things he would do "across the wather," and of the style he would keep when he came back "rollin' in money." And this was the only thing that pleased old Larry. He would listen intently when the Gossoon spoke, and a faint light of pride and pleasure would steal over his sad face. He never touched his fiddle all that week, as far as we heard; but the Gossoon told me that he played in the night softly to himself, and that the tune was no tune at all, and all he could think it was like was the keening at Peter Hiney's burying, when he was drowned in the winter, and all the women from Scartnamuck, up in the hills, followed the corpse home.

I saw them start, the day the Gossoon went. They drove in Con Deasey's cart into Dunmanway, and it was so long a way that they started the day before. The Gossoon was in a full rig-out of new clothes, and sat jauntily on the feather bed that was tied to his trunk by stout hay-ropes. He waved his new hat to me as he passed with a condescending flourish, and bid me good-bye with an intonation quite new to him, but which I recognised as a fair imitation of one Daly, who had returned from America a month or so ago, bringing with him the genuine Yankee twang; which the Gossoon had studied and produced, with marked effect, in the farewells he shouted to the neighbours. I should have laughed aloud as he fired it off magnificently at me, with a new clay pipe—he never smoked before—in his mouth, had I not been close enough to see old Larry's face as he sat in the front of the cart, turned half-back to rest his hand on one of the Gossoon's brogues in the straw by him, the only part of his son he could reach. His usually wan face was dead white; and his lips were tightly compressed as if in a stern resolve that the cruel grief, the awful sense of

coming loneliness, must not make him shrink from the trial at the last moment. He was doing what he knew was best for his son, but it meant a greater wrench, a deeper agony to him than to another. Shut up in the dark as he was, he had only one thing in life he cared for, only one thing he lived for, and that was his son. For years the boy had been everything to him, and for years he had toiled unceasingly for the boy. Now he was going, of his own free will, to set thousands of miles between them, and create for himself a desolate world. I think he never really made up his mind to do it until the last minute, for Con Deasey told me that it was only when the train had begun to move away from the platform at Dunmanway that he drew the money he had saved from his bosom, and held it out towards the Gossoon with a groan that was half a prayer, and that, no sooner had it left his hand, than he groped wildly to snatch it back again. But it was too late; the train had moved on, and the Gossoon was on his way to America.

Larry was not at his post the day after, nor for many a day after that, and it was said in the village that he must be half lonesome without the Gossoon; a mild way of putting it, no doubt, but that was not from any want of sympathy; it was more from an unspoken feeling of delicacy that made his grief something too sacred to be casually discussed. He was left alone all the next week in his little cabin on the hill that faced Terrence Flannigan's farm, and grew a thriving crop of oats on its old sodden thatch with the seeds the west wind blew there. Little Peggy, brother's daughter to Judy Bralligan at the corner shop, boiled the kettle for him and "reddened up" the house, and Judy herself hobbled up once or twice in the day to see it done. I met her coming back on the Saturday night, and I hardly knew her, there was such a gentle look on her cross, wizened old face. The corner of the breen looked strangely empty without the poor crouching figure that we all knew so well, and the children gave up playing there when they found it deserted day after day, and quarrelled with each other in the dusty streets instead.

I went up to see the old man after a while, and found him sitting alone by his empty fireplace, holding something that I saw was an old coat of the Gossoon's in his hands, feeling it with his long nervous fingers and stroking it gently to and fro. There was a world of sadness in his grey eyes, that were set in a face of ivory white, and, it may

have been only imagination, but his long hair seemed more silvered than when I had seen him three weeks before. So absorbed was he in caressing the poor rags that lay in his lap, that his keen ear did not notice my entrance, and it was only when I spoke that he hastily tried to conceal the coat. There was something very piteous in the way he turned to speak, holding it, as he thought, hidden behind him; but I couldn't help seeing it, though I felt a brute for doing so. We talked of the crops, and the weather, and Flannigan's pigs, each avoiding any mention of the Gossoon, but I could see he meant to turn our conversation casually in that direction, and at last he did, by asking me how long it took to get to America. I told him it would take six or eight days—not much more. Then he wanted to know how long it took to come back, and looked surprised when I told him it would take the same time.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well," he answered slowly, "they tells me 'tis down a ship goes an' she sailin' out, till on'y the masts av her is to be seen, an' then thim goes too; an' if she have the fall av the hill wid her goin', won't she have it agin her comin' back?" I tried to explain the thing to him, but with such little success that he clung all the more tenaciously to his theory, and I found myself wondering if he weren't right. That was before I went to school in Bandon. "Which direction is he from me now?" he asked presently, carefully avoiding his son's name. I told him if he sat facing the door, that opened westward, he would be looking towards America. "Ay, looking, but not seein'. God help us!" he murmured, and I wished I had bitten my tongue out before I had spoken so thoughtlessly, while he sat motionless with his white face turned to the open door, and his piteous eyes looking as if they rested on some far-distant object. I never shall forget that picture of desolation. The sordid room we sat in, with its smoke-blackened walls all bare except for a cheap coloured print of the Virgin pointing to her heart, which was shown gashed and bleeding, and a print torn from some Fenian paper, where Ireland was a woman weeping in chains; and the tottering old settle on which we sat by the fireplace, where the "bastable," the iron pot that boils and bakes for all the country, was the only furniture to be seen—unless you count a huge log that, set on end,

was the table, and Larry's three-legged stool in a corner.

I fell to wondering how he lived there at all, until he asked me hesitatingly if I would lead him to the cliff and set him facing the land that held his son. "'Tis a foolish fancy, sor," he added apologetically, as we rose to go. And I led him to the green cliff-top that was but a stone's throw across the road outside, and set him there, gazing with a world of sorrow in the eyes that saw nothing out across the lazy Atlantic that whispered a drowsy day-dream in our ears. He bade me leave him there, and when I hesitated, asked me to tell little Peggy to come for him at sundown. So I went, and left the solitary figure standing clear against the sky, his grey hair tossing gently in the west wind as he bent his head forward as one who watched. After that little Peggy would lead him there every day, carrying the old stool by its longest leg, and he would sit facing the west for hours together, sometimes playing a little on his fiddle, which made the children seek him out again; but they soon forsook him, because they couldn't dance to such sad music as he made, all except little Katie Meehan, who was born a cripple; she would stay by him and pick wild flowers to give him before she went. So the old man grew sadder and more silent day by day, till people tried to persuade him to take up his old pursuit, and bring his fiddle to the fairs and weddings; but with no success until Judy Bralligan asked Father Murphy to try, and the big, soft-hearted priest talked him into it one Sunday after first mass. Our good Catholics very rarely oppose their clergymen, and old Larry promised to go to the wedding of Con Deasey's Ellen, who was to marry a baker from Dunmanway on the next Tuesday.

I had full particulars from many sources of what happened that night. The wedding-party assembled in the kitchen, when the candles were lit, to dance to Larry's fiddle, and many a kindly greeting the old man got as he was led to the top of the room. There was nothing but merry-making around him as he took his place silently and twanged his strings into tune, and there was a loud call for "The Wind that Shakes the Corn"—for Patsey O'Rourke was there whose pride was to set the bacon that hung from the low ceiling all swinging with his feet as he trod that measure. Larry struck up the jig at a pace that soon had all the "floor" breath-

less, but none showed the white feather by crying for slower time—you can hardly fall lower than that in the west. However, it grew slower after a while, and then slower, and if they hadn't the intoxication of dancing on them they would have known that the tune was changed. Some did at length, and stood out to listen, and then more stopped, until Patsey O'Rourke had the floor to himself; and then he stopped too. But no word was spoken. Every one stood listening and watching the player as he rocked slowly to and fro in time to the wild "Lament" that screamed beneath his quivering bow. His eyes looked straight in front of him with all their sadness intensified a hundredfold, and he played on, altogether unconscious of time or place, a wild theme of aching, desolate sorrow that surged and sank under his trembling fingers. There was a dead silence until a woman sobbed, and then Con Deasey cleared his throat manfully, and laid his hand on the old man's arm. He started as if from a dream, and pausing to collect his wandering thoughts, plunged into the jig again; but it only lasted for a few bars; it lost time, stumbled, and stopped.

"'Tis no good for me to thry, Con," said the old man humbly; "take me home out av this."

And then they danced to James Hiney, who volunteered to "jig wid his mouth."

That was old Larry's last appearance in public. Nothing could persuade him to make the attempt again, and we soon gave up trying. After the failure to take up his old profession, his figure might have been seen any day on the cliff-top, and sometimes far into the night too. After a while, when he realised that he was living on charity, he took to plaiting creels with slender osier shoots, as he had learned to do before he knew the gift of music that dwelt in him; and many a creel and "kitch" to carry turf and potatoes he made for the farmers, who only sought an excuse for giving him money and food. As for his fiddle, it was rarely heard, and then it was by a belated wayfarer who paused for a moment to listen outside the cabin window, where never a light shone, and who hurried away from such sad strains, muttering a prayer to Our Lady for the blind man in his loneliness.

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